



# NEWS

*from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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## **Comment Period Extended for Proposal to Remove the Peregrine Falcon From the Endangered Species List**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which in August proposed to remove the recovering peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) from the list of endangered and threatened species, is extending the deadline for public comment on the proposal. The final deadline for written comments on the proposal is now January 23, 1999. The extension will allow for an additional 60 days for the Service to gather the best scientific and commercial data available to make a final determination on the status of the peregrine falcon. Public hearings on the issue will be held in Madison, Wisconsin and Concord, New Hampshire.

After reviewing any additional scientific data collected during the comment period, the Service will make a final determination on the status of the peregrine falcon. If the species is removed from the Endangered Species List, the Service will continue to monitor the species for at least five years, tracking population trends, productivity, contaminant exposure, and take for falconry purposes. The species will continue to be protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

The population of the peregrine falcon has increased from a low of 324 breeding pairs in 1975 to 1593 breeding pairs in the United States and Canada in 1997. Biologists credit the banning of the pesticide DDT in 1972, protections provided by the Endangered Species Act and reintroduction efforts by the Service, states and private raptor experts for the bird's recovery.

Written comments should be sent to Diane Noda, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above Service address.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 500 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special

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management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts.

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